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PRICE 15 CENTS

After the Matinée

Hellen Morrison Howie

THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY



After the Mistake

THE STORY OF A MISTAKE

BY J. M. G. J. G. J. G.

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A Comedy in One Act

By Hellen Morrison Howie

Author of "His Father's Son," "The Reformer Reformed," etc.



PHILADELPHIA
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After the Matinée

CAST OF CHARACTERS

DOROTHY WESTON, *A fascinating, if somewhat high-spirited society girl.*

ALAN MAXFIELD, M. D., *her lover.*

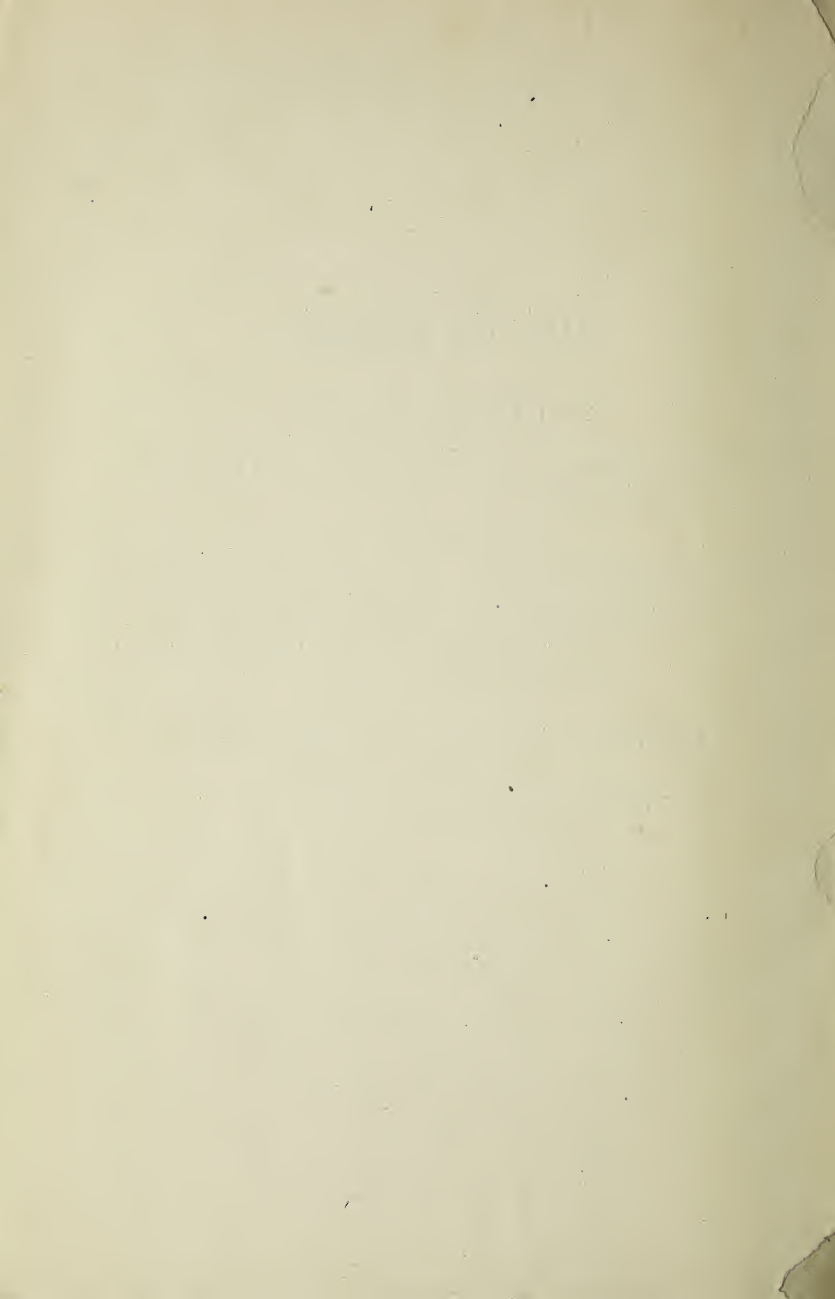
DICK WESTON, *her brother. A boy of sixteen, who affects the manners of a man.*

LUCY, *the maid.*

COSTUMES IN ACCORDANCE WITH CHARACTERS

TIME IN REPRESENTATION—ONE HOUR.

Gen. res. 15 Nov. 44 Franklin



AFTER THE MATINÉE

SCENE.—*A handsomely furnished room with double doors opening into a small hall at the back ; on the right towards the front, a fireplace, a fire burning in the grate, clock and ornaments on the mantel shelf ; in front of the fireplace a table on which some magazines, a paper-knife, a fan and various small objects are scattered ; in the centre of the table, a lamp turned low ; chairs are placed at each side, and one at the further end of the table—the chair to the right being a low fauteuil ; at the further end of the room, at the right, an escritoire ; at the left of the room a piano ; a settee and chairs tastefully disposed about the apartment.*

DOROTHY (*slipping from her shoulders a handsome theatre wrap and throwing it on the settee*). Pardon me, Mr. Maxfield, if I fail to see why I should take the trouble of explaining my moods to you !

MAXFIELD. Well, Dorothy I must say, I never saw a woman who could work herself into a rage so successfully as you can ! (*Placing his coat and hat on a chair by the door.*)

DOROTHY. I don't have to work very hard to get into a rage when I am in your company ! (*Turning up the lamp.*)

MAXFIELD. Is not this ridiculously childish ! Why do you persist in making yourself unhappy—and me ? (*Attempting to take her hand.*)

DOROTHY (*jerking it away*). Which is vastly more important of course ! But you mistake. What cause have I for unhappiness ? Have I not this very afternoon spent three and a half hours in your delightful society ? Then the play was bright—you had nothing to do with that—and I enjoyed it despite the fact that you sat with your eyes shut throughout the performance and answered “Yes” without even opening them when I asked you if my hair was all right !

MAXFIELD (*amused*). Did I though ?—that was a very grave offence I admit. Was it my only one ?

DOROTHY (*with a shrug*). Let us drop the matter ; it is, as you say, so ridiculously childish. (*Glancing at the clock.*) Are you forgetting that your father leaves for the west to-night and that you must see him before his departure ?

MAXFIELD (*smiling*). No ; but I have half an hour yet. (*DOROTHY with the air of a martyr sinks into a chair with a sigh.*) Dorothy ! (*Reproachfully.*)

DOROTHY (*mockingly*). Dorothy ! Dorothy ! How tired I am of the sound ! Why didn't mamma call me Catherine, or Julia, or Beatrix, or Helen, or anything but Dorothy ! A more inappropriate name could hardly have been bestowed upon me.

MAXFIELD. True. You are hopelessly different from the Dorothy of tradition. The very name shows that—Dorothea, gift from Heaven.

DOROTHY. You mean to imply ?

MAXFIELD. Not at all. Though at times you have a decided talent for making things hot.

DOROTHY. Wretch !

MAXFIELD. The Dorothy of tradition is sweet and gentle, winsome and—

DOROTHY. Everything that I am not ! I know that is what you are going to say, so I may just as well anticipate.

MAXFIELD. Not exactly. But I have remarked how singularly inappropriate your name is. Still it is hardly fair to blame your mother. Poor woman, she meant well ! When you lay in her arms, a soft little wad of swan's-down cotton (*DOROTHY smiles in spite of herself*) you seemed to her a veritable gift from Heaven. She couldn't tell then how you were going to grow up, you know.

DOROTHY. Such impertinence !

MAXFIELD. Considering her Puritan blood, she did very well by you. You know she might have called you Hope, Faith, or Charity, or even Patience ! (*Laughing.*)

DOROTHY (*mocking him*). Ha ! ha ! Funny, isn't it ? I suppose you think I ought to have been christened Imp or Firebrand, or Vixen, or Gadfly, or—

MAXFIELD (*leaning over her chair and speaking in a changed voice*). No, dear, but oftentimes in my thoughts I call you Cassandra, because you inspire love.

DOROTHY (*with a curl of her lip*). Really I prefer your other mood. It is more natural. As for my name (*rising*), that has always been to me a matter of the supremest indifference—until lately, when the constant sound of it on your lips, has become almost intolerable !

MAXFIELD. Miss Weston ! Dorothy !

DOROTHY. There ! Once more !

MAXFIELD. By Jove, it takes a woman to be cruel !

DOROTHY. Yes, and it takes a man to be dense !

MAXFIELD. That is true ; and as I am more dense than the average male, you will have to tell me, Dorothy, how I offended you this afternoon. It was rather unlover-like conduct to sit there with my eyes closed, I admit—but I had seen the play before, dear, and your attention seemed so entirely engrossed. It wasn't that I was tired or bored, for mentally I was seeing scenes far more beautiful than those on the stage. Shall I tell you of what I was thinking as I sat by your side this afternoon ? Thank you. I see by your expression that you would fain spare me the unnecessary trouble.

DOROTHY. Then my looks but feebly express my feelings.

MAXFIELD. Such refreshing candor ! Nevertheless even at the risk of boring you—

DOROTHY (*with a slight upward movement of the hands*). Quite used to it, I assure you.

MAXFIELD. In that case may I beg once more your kind indulgence ? (*Motions DOROTHY to be seated ; with a shrug and lifting of the eyebrows she slowly sinks into the fauteuil ; MAXFIELD is a little to one side and back of DOROTHY, leaning, half sitting on the edge of the table ; he looks down at her as he talks.*) Rather queer, wasn't it, that I should be thinking just then of the time when I first met you, away out there in Monterey. You may not believe it, Dorothy, but those were the happiest days I ever spent. There is just so much that one gets in this life, and it is a good deal to be able to say "I was perfectly happy then." Monterey ! Whenever I hear that name my heart beats faster. Nowhere else to me are the skies quite so blue ; nowhere else do the waves sing such a glad song as they do along the curve of that enchanted beach. Do you remember how we used to stroll for hours along that level stretch of sand ? This chair isn't half so comfortable, is it, as the seat I improvised for you, in the hulk of that old overturned boat ? Do you remember how those fishermen's children used to come over every morning for pennies ? (*Continuing more slowly.*) Do you remember the day when we walked out to the very end of the Crescent ?—it was there that you first told me that you loved—

DOROTHY (*with a quick upward movement of the hand towards his lips*). Oh, no, no, no ! (*She regains her composure instantly.*) Strange ! (*Knitting her brows in pretended thought.*) Was it to you I made that sweet confession

out there on the rocks? What a wretched memory I have, to be sure! You see those three Woodruff boys were at Monterey that season.

MAXFIELD (*turns on his heel with a muttered exclamation; after a moment returns to her side; continues, in a tone of affected lightness*). Surely you remember the day we went fishing?

DOROTHY (*shaking her head*). Never caught a fish in my life.

MAXFIELD. I didn't say you caught any fish, dear.

DOROTHY. Oh! (*Aside*.) That's the time he landed his fish all right.

MAXFIELD (*piqued*). Perhaps you have also forgotten those evenings on the pier?

DOROTHY. Oh, no, I remember sitting there quite often—with mamma.

MAXFIELD. Your mother didn't happen to be present on the occasions of which I speak.

DOROTHY. Ah! that accounts for your being there. (*With an impatient exclamation MAXFIELD walks to the opposite side of the room; DOROTHY rises, coming forward towards the centre and front of the stage; MAXFIELD approaches, standing back and left of her.*) But now that you have had the questionable satisfaction of proving that my memory is so faulty, let me try yours. Do you remember that afternoon when we went out in the row boat? How I sang to you (*MAXWELL slips his arm about her waist; DOROTHY takes no notice*), and braided a rope of seaweed and flung it to you, and you wound it about you and called yourself my captive, and how the boat drifted far out beyond the inlet, and how you had to row like mad to get in again, because that terrific thunder-storm came up, and how we were drenched to the skin, and my new gown was ruined, and—don't you remember that trip?

MAXFIELD (*somewhat bitterly*). Aren't you getting me mixed up with one of those Woodruff boys?

DOROTHY (*breaking away from him with a tantalizing laugh*). Nothing the matter with your memory, I see.

(*Takes a seat beside the table.*)

MAXFIELD. Will you stop fooling!

DOROTHY. I'm not fooling. I really took that trip. (*Glancing at the clock.*)

MAXFIELD (*notes the direction of her glance*). I have still fifteen minutes you see, but as you seem particularly anxious to be relieved of my presence I will go, especially as

know that just now it is useless to stay. Nothing I can do or say avails when my lady is in one of her moods. (*Goes to the chair by the door, and lifting his overcoat commences to put it on; continues in a gayer tone.*) But when I return this evening, as I will, in a couple of hours, I—

DOROTHY (*in a changed, hard voice*). Pardon me, Dr. Maxfield, but I am engaged for this evening.

(*She has risen and is standing with her back to him, her hand on the table, against which she leans.*)

MAXFIELD (*stops abruptly in the act of putting on his coat; takes it off and lays it once more on the chair; advances, but without any appearance of hurrying, to her side*). You surely have forgotten! It was you, yourself, who told me to come this evening.

DOROTHY. I—I have changed my mind.

MAXFIELD. What a tease you are, to be sure! (*Attempts to put his arm about her; she pushes his hand away, facing him suddenly.*) Dorothy! It can't be that you mean it! That you do not wish me to come?

DOROTHY (*coldly and deliberately*). That is what I mean, Dr. Maxfield. I do not wish you to call again to-night, or—ever!

MAXFIELD. Do you know what you are saying? Look at me! (*Seizes her wrist and forces her to meet his gaze.*) By Jove! I believe you mean it! No! No! It is too absurd—too unjust! At least tell me—what have I done? (*She remains silent, her head averted.*) Speak!

DOROTHY (*wrenching her hand free*). I have nothing to say.

MAXFIELD. Then I have! Only three words, but therein lies the key to your mood. You are jealous! (*Speaking the last three words very distinctly and close to her ear.*)

DOROTHY (*with a forced laugh*). Ha! ha! This is a good joke. Jealous am I—I—and of whom, pray?

MAXFIELD (*producing from his vest pocket a miniature*). Did you ever see that face before? (*Holding it before her.*)

DOROTHY (*scarcely glancing at it*). Surely if I had I should never have forgotten it. It is so exceedingly ugly.

MAXFIELD (*smiling and addressing the miniature*). Not quite so bad as that, is it, Bluebell, my dear?

DOROTHY (*aside*). Bluebell! Listen to the name! Bluebell-s-s-s. (*Making a sound of contempt.*)

MAXFIELD (*placing the miniature on the table and turning to DOROTHY*). True, she isn't handsome like you, but then she's good—

DOROTHY. Unlike me, hey?

MAXFIELD. Ahem! Thank you. (DOROTHY crosses to the piano where she stands, her elbow on the top of the instrument, her back to MAXFIELD; with her right hand she thumps out in an aggravating way the popular negro melody, "I Don't Like no Cheap Man," MAXFIELD continues in an aside.) Dorothy jealous! Well (rubbing his hands), this is a new experience for me. It will do her no harm to find out how it feels. This accounts for her strange behavior at the matinée. She was all right until I took out my wallet and began searching for one of her letters, the date of which we were disputing; then Bluebell's picture slipped out and fell right into her lap. She scarcely touched it as she returned it to me, saying, in that cold little tone of hers, "I see my letters keep good company." Jealous!—of course she is! Oh, if she only knew! (Looking at DOROTHY.) Look at her now, the little jade! I'm dying to crush her in my arms!—but not yet!—not yet!

DOROTHY (in mock surprise, turning from the piano). What! not gone yet?

MAXFIELD. No; going. (Puts on his coat, lifts his hat from the chair and bows.) Good-evening, Miss Weston.

DOROTHY. Good-bye, Dr. Maxfield. (He goes out; DOROTHY remains motionless; there is a short pause.)

MAXFIELD (returning and standing in the doorway). Dorothy!

DOROTHY. Alan! (He advances and is about to take her in his arms; she repels him with a motion of the hand.) No, no! take back what you said first.

MAXFIELD (puzzled). What I said?

DOROTHY. Yes. (Somewhat hesitatingly.) This afternoon at the matinée you said that you—loved her.

MAXFIELD (biting his lip to keep back a smile). Did I say that? Well, it is true—but I love you more.

DOROTHY (mockingly). Oh, thank you! Take my advice, Dr. Maxfield, and transfer the affection you are wasting on me—to—what's the name?—ah, yes—Bluebell! I assure you that even then the poor dear won't have any too much.

MAXFIELD. I don't think she would prize it very highly; besides, I'm sure she never even dreams that I care for her.

DOROTHY. Not at all surprising, if you treat her as you do me.

MAXFIELD. It is quite a long story about Bluebell. Do you think you will be able to trust me until to-night, dear, when I will explain everything?

DOROTHY. If you have any explanation to make, Dr. Maxfield, it must be made now or never!

MAXFIELD. And this is the quality of your love for me! I have given you everything, but when I ask you simply to withhold judgment for two short hours I get this reply.

DOROTHY. Now or never!

MAXFIELD. Neither; but to-night at half-past nine I will be here.

DOROTHY. Then I will be elsewhere.

MAXFIELD. Listen, Dorothy Weston! (*Seizing both her hands while she struggles vainly to free herself.*) You don't know what it means to be thwarted. You have been spoiled and petted, loved and worshipped all your life. I, more than the others, have humored your every whim, but for this once I intend to be master—and to-night when I return you will be here—do you understand? Until then you must—you shall trust me! (*Forces her back into a chair, covers her face with kisses, snatches his hat and rushes from the room.*)

DOROTHY (*starting to her feet with a cry of baffled rage*). Insufferable audacity! How dare he! And I'll be here to-night to receive him, will I?—oh, we'll see! (*Rings for her maid; enter LUCY.*) Lucy, tell Baker when Dr. Maxfield calls, as he will this evening at half-past nine o'clock—to say that I am not at home. Make no mistake, Lucy! You understand?

LUCY. Yes, miss, perfectly.

DOROTHY. And, Lucy, I wish you would bring me my slippers—and—(*Breaks off abruptly, evidently revolving some vexed question in her mind; there is a short pause.*)

LUCY. Yes, miss?

DOROTHY. And—you may pack my valise.

LUCY. You are going away?

DOROTHY. Yes. I think a change of air will be beneficial. Then Aunt Margaret has been so anxious to have me visit her. I have neglected her long enough.

LUCY (*aside*). Oh, yes—but I know what is back of this sudden affection for Aunt Margaret. I told Baker that they had had a quarrel! An elegant man like Dr. Maxfield—so polite—as he is—doesn't run people down in the hall the way he did me a few minutes ago unless he's terribly excited. It's a lover's quarrel, that's what. (*Runs off.*)

DOROTHY (*wanders restlessly about the room; takes up a book, turns the pages a minute, slams it down again, as she does so, perceives the miniature on the table. Sarcastically*). Has he gone and actually left you, Bluebell? (*Examines the photo.*) And I am jealous of her, am

I? Why, there isn't a pretty feature in her face! Look at her nose? To be kind, we'll call it *retroussé*, but it's nothing but an old-fashioned pug! Such a weak chin! There's a person who has never learned the art of expression. She sits all in a heap, lifting her eyes in a deprecating sort of way, as if she were apologizing to the artist for her lack of beauty—and well she might. (*Tossing it on the table.*)

(*Enter LUCY with her mistress's slippers which she places beside the chair, near the fire.*)

LUCY (*poking at the fire*). Shall I put on another log, miss?

DOROTHY (*with her back turned*). As you please.

LUCY. One? (*Pausing with the second log in her hand.*)

DOROTHY. One—yes—or twenty.

LUCY (*aside, laying down the wood, and lifting her hands*). My, she doesn't care for nothing now. Just acts like Rosilander in the story Baker read to me when the Duke brought her the jewels that had been heirlooms (*pronounces the letter h*) in his family for thousands of years—she just swept them to one side as though they had been so much rubbish, and kept calling out, "Oh, that I were dead! Oh, that I were dead!" (*in tragic imitation of the fair Rosalinda.*) Just because she had quarrelled with Fitzhugh, and he had left her to ride across the border with Prince Charlie. My! it's a terrible thing—this love! (*Puts the log on the fire, and, getting down on her knees, dusts the hearth, stealing an occasional glance at her mistress.*)

DOROTHY (*aside*). Am I the same girl who sang so gayly this morning? This morning, why it seems ages ago! I was too happy. I might have known something would happen. (*Aloud.*) Oh! (*Forgetful of LUCY's presence sinks into a chair, and burying her face in her hands, lays her head on the table.*)

LUCY (*starting to her feet*). Oh, miss, what is it? Are you ill?

DOROTHY (*rising*). No, no, it's nothing. You have brought my slippers, I see. (*Seats herself in a chair by the fire; LUCY kneels to unfasten her mistress's shoes; a short pause.*) Lucy, during my absence you may take a week and go down and see your mother—but don't be running off and getting married.

LUCY (*shaking her head*). Oh, no, miss.

DOROTHY. You say that very decidedly. Do you mean to say that a good-looking girl like you didn't leave a lover behind you down there in Winslow?

LUCY (*with a toss of her head*). Indeed I did, miss, more than one.

DOROTHY. There, I knew it! Tell me about them. Begin as far back as you remember. Who was your very first sweetheart?

LUCY (*bashfully*). Well, there was Sam Burns—but gracious, I wouldn't call him a sweetheart! Ugh! the sight of him would make you sick! His trousers came up to there (*touching her dress midway between the ankle and knee*) and his jacket sleeves came way below his knuckles. His right jacket sleeve was always shiny, too. His mother put pins in it, but it didn't cure him. He never spoke to the other girls, but he always said, "Hello, Lucy!" (*imitating SAM'S manner of drawing his sleeve across his nose*) to me. He was the dirtiest thing! Yet somehow that boy got around me! Why, I even gave him a Christmas present once.

DOROTHY. What did you give him? Handkerchiefs?

LUCY (*laughing loudly*). Ha, ha! (*Claps her hand over her mouth, abashed at the noise she has made.*)

DOROTHY. Poor Sam! But what about the other young man—Barclay, I think, was his name?

LUCY (*sighing*). Yes, miss. It makes me feel lonesome when I think of him. He was such lively company till he drank hisself to death, and he was the obliquiest young man you ever seen. Why, when Mrs. Eastman wrote to Mrs. Mortimer of Glen Farm to tell the Watsons to tell Mrs. Simpson to tell her man to let my mother know that your mother wanted a maid—(*gasping for breath*) he walked twenty miles in a blinding snowstorm to bring us word. Poor Barclay! He was a nice young man but he had one fault.

DOROTHY. Yes, intemperance is the curse of—

LUCY. Oh, no, miss—I don't mean drink. (*Lowering her voice.*) He was jealous!

DOROTHY (*with a little gasp*). Oh!

LUCY. And as my mother used to say—you see she knew—my father was a bit that way—"When a man or a woman gives way to that feeling no lunatic will equal them for crazy goings on!" You see, miss, they're clean out of their heads for the time being, they really are! My mother used to say she'd rather have a mad dog to deal with than a jealous man or woman—the brute was more reasonablelike.

DOROTHY (*somewhat embarrassed*). Was—Barclay very outrageous?

LUCY. Indeed he was! He was something awful! He

made me promise that I wouldn't even look at a man when I came here, and he wrote me such letters! I was nearly scared to death! He said if I even so much as glanced at a New York policeman he would come down and smash the whole Broadway squad! He did indeed!

(Enter DICK WESTON.)

DICK (*to DOROTHY*). Oh, here you are! I thought you'd never get home from that confounded matinée! (*LUCY retires; DICK pulls her apron string as she passes.*) By the way, I met Maxfield just now rushing around the corner; he was muttering to himself and smiling like an idiot. I didn't speak to him.

DOROTHY. Just as well. You might have chased that smile.

DICK. That's so. There's no love lost between us. He imagines he's the only pebble on the beach. What do you think! The other day when he met me he patted me on the shoulder and said "How do you do, Dick, my boy?" My boy, to me! What do you think of that?

DOROTHY (*turning away to hide a smile*). He's daring enough for anything, that man.

DICK. Said I was ruining my health with these beastly cigarettes. (*Produces one.*) Say, you don't mind my smoking, do you?

DOROTHY. Most decidedly. There, at least, I agree with Dr. Maxfield.

DICK. Oh, of course! I have noticed of late that you and he seem to understand each other pretty well. Dorothy Weston (*seizing a paper-knife from the table and brandishing it in a murderous fashion*), if you married that fellow I would—! (*Pushes back her head and draws the knife across her throat significantly.*) Ah! Do you understand?

DOROTHY (*laughing*). Perfectly. But (*somewhat bitterly*), don't be afraid. There isn't much danger of that just at present.

DICK. Just as well. As your brother, I have, of course, your welfare at heart. (*Inflates his chest, spreads his legs and begins toying with the down on his upper lip.*) And I must confess that the question of your marriage has been causing me very grave anxiety.

DOROTHY. Now I know what has affected your health! And mother's been declaring it was because you hadn't cut all your second teeth.

DICK. Dorothy Weston, you have a way of saying things

that I despise ! There's no sisterly affection about you. Now to show you how different I am—what a kind, brotherly heart I have—I will refrain from telling you what Jack Woodruff said about you the other day.

DOROTHY (*coaxingly*). Ah, now, Dickie, you know that's mean of you. (*Putting her arm about his neck and smoothing the lapel of his jacket.*) Tell me—there's a sweetie-weety !

DICK (*shakes his head*). No.

DOROTHY. Please, Dicky, dear.

DICK. No, I say !

DOROTHY. Dickie, I insist !

DICK (*with mock reluctance*). Well, if you insist—

DOROTHY. Yes, yes !

DICK. He said he was willing to wager a hundred dollars that you would marry Maxfield, because he was the only man who knew how to manage you.

DOROTHY (*pushing him from her and turning away with a frown*). Manage me, indeed !

DICK. M-m-m—that's what he said. Doesn't sound very complimentary, does it ? Kind of as if you were a refractory horse, don't you know. We men make use of a great many expressions that are more forceful than elegant, I admit. But, say, Dorothy—to come down to business—will you lend me a five ?

DOROTHY. Dick Weston ! Are you absolutely devoid of conscience ? How much money have I already given you this month ? If father and mother knew—

DICK. But they never will.

DOROTHY. Don't be too sure of that. It is very questionable kindness on my part to shield you. You are getting into habits of extravagance simply appalling in a boy of your age.

DICK. Sister mine, you talk like a—a—sister—and of course I know you mean it for my good and all that—and—if you'll just give me a five this once, I'll reform—'pon my word I will—stop smoking—stop—well, I'll be a good boy all at once !

DOROTHY. A gradual reform is more apt to be lasting—so I'll begin the good work by withholding that five.

DICK. Knew by your face the moment I came in that you were in a beastly temper—wouldn't have risked my chances, but I tell you, Dorothy, I must have that money right away ! (*DOROTHY shakes her head.*) Now, don't shake your head ! Just listen a minute, will you ? (*Leans across the table where he sees the miniature.*) Hello ! (*Picking it up.*) How does Lulu Thornton's picture happen to be here ?

(DOROTHY *starts.*) Oh, Maxfield, of course! (*Tossing it down.*)

DOROTHY (*aside*). Maxfield, of course! Then everybody knows it! Oh! (*Clinching her hands.*)

DICK. Now, listen, Dorothy! You know Harry Winters—well, he and I are going to take the train—

DOROTHY (*pursuing her own thoughts*). Whose picture did you say that was, Dick?

DICK. I didn't say anything about taking a picture! I said we were going to take the train.

DOROTHY. Yes, yes, I know. I mean what did you call this—this person? (*Taking up the miniature which she examines.*)

DICK. Lulu Thornton, of course. What's the matter with your memory?

DOROTHY (*aside, puzzled*). Lulu Thornton, I've heard that name before, but where—when?

DICK. Well, we are going to Hartford to spend a few days with Captain Rogers. His daughter Mamie—

DOROTHY (*still looking at the miniature and speaking of LULU THORNTON*). What is she?

DICK. What is she? Why, she's his daughter, Mamie Rogers, of course!

DOROTHY. No, no, I mean this Lulu Thornton?

DICK. Oh! An actress—at least, she used to be.

DOROTHY (*aside*). An actress!

DICK. Mamie is one of the prettiest girls! Laura Dilling can't hold a candle to her.

DOROTHY (*as before*). Is she married?

DICK. Is she married? Why she isn't out of school yet? What under the sun are you maundering about! Oh, it's Lulu Thornton once more, is it? Yes, she's married, may be dead and buried for anything I know to the contrary. By the way. (*Walking over to the escritoire.*) I must find out about that train. I think it leaves at eight o'clock in the morning. (*Begins hunting for a time-table in one of the pigeon-holes.*)

DOROTHY (*as before*). Dickie, are you sure that you are not mistaken?

DOROTHY. No, I'm not sure. That's why I'm hunting for a time-table.

DOROTHY. I mean about this—actress. I had heard her spoken of as Blue—

DICK. Bluebeard, eh? Now look here, I'm sick of this! (*Advances to DOROTHY.*) Am I talking to you, or are you talking to me, or does either of us know to whom we are

talking, or what we are talking about? Do you mean to say that Maxfield has never told you about his brother's marriage?

DOROTHY. His brother's marriage?—What has that to do with—Oh, yes, I remember—his brother Charlie married an actress. (*Excitedly.*) You don't mean to say that this—

DICK. Yes, that's she, Lulu Thornton, Charlie Maxfield's wife. The family raised a great time about the marriage at first, but when they saw what a brick she was—how she nursed Charlie through the fever, and stood by him all through his financial troubles—why they changed their minds, and now they think there's nobody in the world like her.

DOROTHY (*aside*). Yes, yes, I begin to see it all now. And that man says he isn't a tease—Oh! Still, Dick may be mistaken. (*Aloud, advancing and motioning to her brother to approach.*) Come here! (*Holds the miniature before his eyes.*) Dickie, are you perfectly sure that that woman is Dr. Maxfield's brother's wife?

DICK (*imitating*). Yes, I am perfectly sure that that woman is Dr. Maxfield's brother's wife. Do you want me to swear to it? What's up? You act like a detective following a clue.

DOROTHY (*hesitatingly*). But Dr. Maxfield called her Bluebell.

DICK. Oh, Dr. Maxfield called her Bluebell, did he? Well, he's her brother-in-law,—he ought to know. (*Suspiciously.*) I understood you to say that Maxfield had never spoken of her to you.

DOROTHY (*slightly embarrassed*). Neither he has. He merely mentioned the name Bluebell in connection with that photograph.

DICK (*looking at her sharply and evidently thinking hard*). Oh, he did, did he? (*A short pause.*) Well, her right name was Isabelle Hart. Bluebell might be a pet name. It is not improbable—Isabelle—Bluebell—hey?

DOROTHY. Improbable! Not at all. Isabelle—Bluebell—why that's as plain! (*Drawing a breath of intense relief.*) My, what a bright boy you are, Dickie!

DICK (*drawing himself up*). It takes some people a long time to find out things.

DOROTHY (*aside*). The feeling of relief I experience proves to me how much I was suffering. How could he do it! My teasing is innocence itself compared with his. Oh, the rascal! I—I—love him—there! I don't believe that in my heart I really doubted him. Still, I did experience some

of the pangs of jealousy—and as Lucy's mother says, "A mad dog is more reasonable than a jealous man or woman," (*Aloud.*) Oh, what a fool I've been.

DICK. There, you are beginning to talk like a person of sense. I knew that you would soon see the matter in that light. Say, Dot, suppose you make it a ten.

DOROTHY (*laughing*). You rascal! (*Pinching his ear.*) Well, Dick, for this once a ten it shall be—for you've earned it.

DICK (*aside*). Earned it, did I! Well, that was a cinch! What's the matter with her, anyhow. She isn't often in such a generous mood. I'm afraid I've wasted a golden opportunity. I could kick myself. I know now how a Chat-ham Jew feels when a customer has given him his asking price without a demur. Why didn't I raise the ante? (*Aloud, turning to his sister.*) Dorothy—you—know how fast money goes and—

DOROTHY. Ten, Dickie. Not a dollar more.

DICK. Just another five.

DOROTHY. Not another cent.

DICK. You mean it?

DOROTHY. I mean it—but Dickie, dear, I'll fix it all right with papa about your going, and I'll make you a present of my new grip.

DICK. I asked Lucy for it a few minutes ago—but she said you needed it—that you were going to Aunt Margaret's.

DOROTHY. Oh, yes, I forgot. Well, I'll give up that trip. You may have the valise.

DICK. What is the meaning of this unwonted generosity? Dorothy, excuse me, but I fear that you are ill. Let me feel your pulse, sister mine. (*Takes her by the wrist.*)

DOROTHY. No, not ill, Dickie, dear, only so relieved and happy that I could dance for very joy.

DICK. And I!—Ten dollars!—A bran new valise with gold mountings!—Hartford!—Mamie!—Come, Dorothy, that is worth a dance! (*Introduce specialty song or dance or not, at will, carrying on the following fragmentary conversation the while if introduced.*)

DICK. Ah, this is more fun than a goat!

DOROTHY. Of course it is.

DICK. My, what a pretty foot!

DOROTHY. Thank you.

DICK. Dorothy!

DOROTHY. Yes?

DICK. Make it fifteen.

DOROTHY. No—no—no—no—no—no! (*Keeping time to the music.*)

(LUCY appears in the doorway, looking on in some surprise at this unusual exhibition.)

DICK (*sinking into a chair and fanning himself with his handkerchief*). Phew! I can stand no more. (DOROTHY stops and remains standing, using her fan.) Here comes Lucy. I had better go now and dress for dinner. Good-bye for the present, sister mine. (*Leaves the room; chucks LUCY under the chin in passing.*)

DOROTHY. Good-bye, Dick, Well, Lucy, what is it?

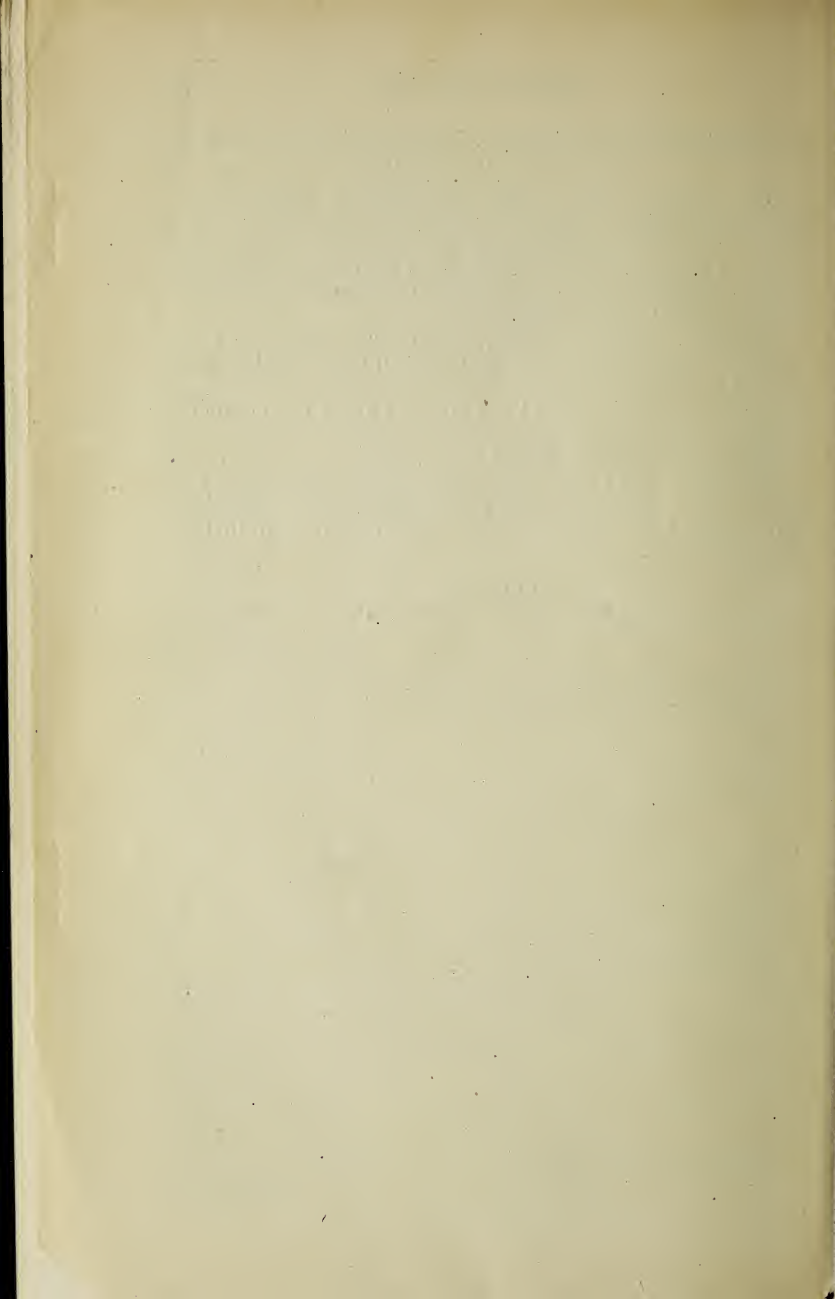
LUCY. Shall I put the book that you were reading into the bag?

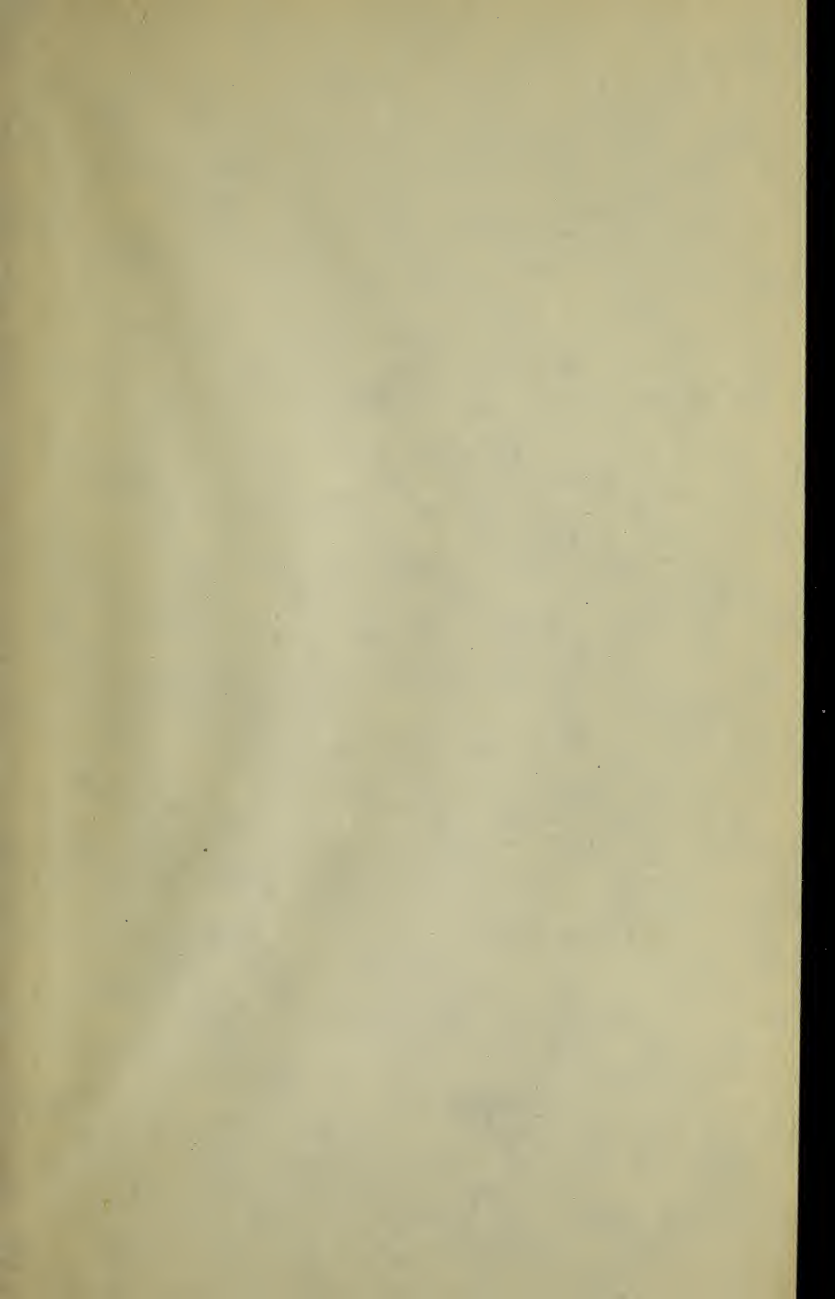
DOROTHY. No. Ahem! In fact you needn't mind about packing.

LUCY. You are not going?

DOROTHY. No; Aunt Margaret doesn't need me—for a while—yet. And, Lucy, I've changed my mind—tell Baker that when Dr. Maxfield calls, I will receive him in the drawing-room.

CURTAIN





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